A THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL EXPLORATION OF EQUITY-ORIENTED RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

A DISSERTATION

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Abstract

While research shows promise for the potential of restorative practices to decrease disparities in school discipline, there are still gaps in understanding the mechanisms by which restorative practices could lead to more equitable outcomes. Scholars have begun exploring the extent that explicit, “culturally conscious” modifications to standard models of restorative practices are likely to have an impact on discipline gaps (Gregory & Clawson, 2016). Yet, the conceptualization and measurement of culturally conscious or equity-oriented restorative practices is lacking. The present study’s participants include three restorative justice coordinators from three different middle and high schools that are located in a large urban district in Northeast United States. The restorative justice coordinators implemented RP in these schools with an explicit focus on addressing racial and social justice. They were interviewed during the summer over a span of four years (2016-2019) totaling 11 interviews. Given the gap in understanding what constitutes equity-oriented restorative practice, this study used literature to propose a conceptual model which includes three components: Equity-Focused Data Analysis and Progress Monitoring, Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, and Social Justice Education. Then, using qualitative methodology, the present study identified an additional component (Student Voice) and examined restorative justice coordinators’ identification of the four components. Based on coding found to have inter-rater reliability, all three restorative justice coordinators mentioned the proposed equity-oriented components during yearly interviews. Of note, Social Justice Education was the most mentioned component and Equity-Focused Data Collection and Progress Monitoring was least mentioned by coordinators. The restorative justice coordinators also differed in their emphasis of mentioned components when compared to each other, suggesting some variation in their program implementation. Taken together, the results implicate that
equity-oriented restorative practices is multifaceted and should be applied in a way that is sensitive to the needs of the setting and stakeholders. To advance practice in this area, the study offers sample activities that embody equity-oriented approaches, as described by experienced school-based restorative justice coordinators.
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Introduction

Although it may be assumed that exclusionary discipline will deter students from disruption and create an improved climate for students who remain in the classroom, research has shown negative correlates of this kind of discipline (Bacher-Hicks et al., 2020). Specifically, research has shown exclusionary discipline practices to be both ineffective and inequitable (Bacher-Hicks et al., 2020); students who are suspended or expelled face an increased risk of academic failure, dropping out, and court involvement (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2019). In addition, decades of research have documented racial and gender disparities in school discipline (Gregory et al., 2017). There is an overrepresentation of African American students in discipline referrals and out-of-school suspension (Fabelo et al., 2011). Disproportionate discipline has also been documented for males, Latinx students, American Indians, students in special education, and lesbian, bisexual, gay, and transgender students (Himmelstein & Bruckner, 2011; U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2019). Moreover, despite an overall decrease in out-of-school suspension rates since the 2011-12 school year, disproportionate rates of suspension persist for Black students and students with disabilities (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2019).

One alternative to the use of exclusionary discipline is restorative practices (RP) or the use of informal and formal processes that proactively build relationships and a sense of community to prevent conflict and harm (Wachtel, 2016). Evidence links RP to decreases in office discipline referrals and suspensions as proponents of RP argue that its change mechanism is the facilitation of positive student-teacher relations through increasing respect and reducing teacher-issued referrals (Fronius et al., 2019; Welsh & Little, 2018). The current dissertation will examine a model for equity-oriented RP using qualitative data from interviews with RP
coordinators and present a modified model that is based on practitioner knowledge. The following literature review addresses (a) exclusionary discipline in schools, (b) a history of RP, (c) the current state of Equity-Oriented RP.

**Exclusionary Discipline in Schools**

Exclusionary discipline, in theory, may be used as means to maintain an uninterrupted learning environment as well as an environment that is physically safe for students, faculty, and school personnel (Blomberg, 2003). According to the School Discipline Support Initiative (2020), exclusionary discipline is any type of school disciplinary action that removes or excludes a student from their usual educational setting. Two of the most common exclusionary discipline practices that occur in schools are suspension and expulsion. The U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Civil Rights (2016) defines two types of suspension; in-school suspension which is any instance when a child is temporarily removed from their regular classroom for at least half a day but remains under the supervision of school staff, and out-of-school suspension which is when the student is removed from school grounds. The School Discipline Support Initiative (2020) refers to expulsion as the permanent removal of a student from their regular educational setting due to a violation of serious school rules or policies.

Crucial to the conversation surrounding exclusionary discipline is its disparate usage. Low-income students, students in special education, male students, African American students, Hispanic youth, Native American youth, LGBT youth and gender non-conforming youth are all groups that are overrepresented in exclusionary discipline (Anyon et al., 2014; Finn & Servoss, 2014; Kaufman et al., 2010; Losen et al., 2015; Poteat et al., 2016; Wallace et al., 2008). To elaborate, research has found that in comparison to White students, Black students are 3.2 times more likely to be suspended or expelled, Native American students are 2.0 times more likely to
be suspended or expelled, and Hispanic students are 1.3 times more likely to be suspended or expelled (Nowicki, 2018). While research has not identified causal links to the disparate usage of exclusionary discipline, it has been argued that zero-tolerance policies and movement toward more surveillance and law enforcement activities in urban schools with more minority youth may contribute to the discipline gap (Welch & Payne, 2010). It is also argued that staff bias may be a contributing factor as students can be suspended for discretionary behavioral offenses such as disrespect or being perceived as a threat (Fronius et al., 2019; NAACP, 2017), and further analyses revealed that 46% of the Black/White discipline gap can be attributed to differential treatment and support (Owens & McLanahan, 2020). To further illustrate, in a study where preschool teachers were asked to monitor classroom footage for “problem behaviors”, teachers were more likely to carefully track Black boys in a classroom than students of any other demographic profile (Gilliam et al., 2016).

Especially concerning are the short- and long-term implications of disparate school discipline. At the outset, being removed from the classroom immediately impacts a student’s access to the learning environment. In a national study that analyzed lost instruction days due to out-of-school suspension, it was identified that in 13 states, Black secondary students lost 100 more days of instruction as compared to their White peers (Losen & Martinez, 2020). While it may be assumed that removing students who engage in disruptive behavior will deter others from disruption and create an improved climate for those students who remain, research has shown negative correlates of exclusionary discipline (APA, Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2008). Specifically, research has shown exclusionary discipline practices to be ineffective for improving both student academic and behavioral trajectory. Research has also consistently shown that students who are suspended or expelled face an increased risk of academic failure, dropping out,
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and court involvement (APA, Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2008). A meta-analysis (Noltemeyer et al., 2015) that was conducted using 53 cases from 34 studies revealed a statistically significant inverse relationship between suspension and academic achievement. A statistically significant positive relationship was also found between out of school suspension and dropout rate (Noltemeyer et al., 2015).

Restorative Practices Overview

One alternative to the use of exclusionary discipline in schools is RP as it is viewed as a remedy to both the negative consequences of exclusionary punishment and its disproportionate application (Fronius et al., 2019). RP started in Western European systems as restorative justice, or a way of approaching criminal justice that stresses repairing the harm done interpersonally instead of only punishing offenders (Zehr, 1990). Specifically, restorative justice originated in Western European forms of the justice system in the 1970s as mediation between victims and offenders (Wachtel, 2016). In 1974, a probation officer named Mark Yantzi organized for two teenagers to meet with their victims after a vandalism incident and the teens agreed to restitution. The first victim-offender reconciliation program was established Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, after positive feedback from the victims (McCold, 1999; Peachey, 1989). Not too long after, the program took on various names, including victim-offender mediation and victim-offender dialogue and comparable programs spread through Australia, New Zealand, North America, and Europe during the 1980s and 1990s (Umbreit & Greenwood, 2000).

Restorative justice eventually expanded to include the families and friends of the victims and offenders, using collaborative processes called conferences and circles. Family group conferences (FGC), which started in New Zealand in 1989, were a response to native Maori people’s concerns with excessive court involvement with their children. In 1991, the FGC was
modified by an Australian policer to deter youth from said court involvement. The International Institute of Restorative Practices now refers to the 1991 adaptation as a restorative conference. In 1994, an Australian educator named Marg Thorsborne was credited as the first person to use a restorative conference in a school (O’Connell, 1998).

It should also be mentioned that restorative justice parallels ancient and indigenous traditions seen in cultures around the world, including Native American, First Nation Canadian, African, Asian, Celtic, Hebrew, and Arab cultures (Eagle, 2001; Goldstein, 2006; Haarala, 2004; Mbambo & Skelton, 2003; Mirsky, 2004; Roujanavong, 2005; Wong, 2005). For example, the African concept of ubuntu is the philosophy of personhood underlying the traditional conception of justice (Llewellyn & Howse, 1999). Aboriginal peoples in various parts of the world practice a concept which is sometimes called sacred justice. It is way of handling disagreements that helps mend relationships and provides solutions. It addresses the underlying causes of the disagreement (Llewellyn & Howse, 1999).

A helpful concept that is used as a supporting framework for RP is the social discipline window which has four quadrants containing different levels of control and support. It describes four approaches to maintaining social norms and behavioral boundaries (Wachtel, 2016). RP fits in the quadrant with a combination of both high control and support. The social discipline window can serve as a leadership model in a range of settings including home, school, community-based organizations, and the government. Also, set forth as part of RP is the Fundamental Hypothesis of RP which states that people are more likely to make positive changes in their behavior when collaborating or playing a participatory role with those in authority (Wachtel, 2005).
As previously mentioned, between 1970’s - 1990’s restorative justice transformed into the modern-day RP that are being implemented in schools today. RP in education emphasizes values related to the essential need for (a) nurturing relationship-based communities, (b) replacing punitive models of discipline with restorative models that promote repair of harm, (c) moving from systems of social control to systems of social engagement, (d) confronting hierarchical and authoritarian systems that instill attitudes of obedience and conformity, and (e) committing to disrupting oppressive structures and systems (Gregory & Evans, 2020). While concrete interventions in RP implementation vary between schools, they largely include the following: restorative circles, responsive circles/conferences, and affective statements. Restorative circles aim to help students establish contact with their peers and to experience being seen and heard. Responsive conferences include dialogue in which harm is discussed and pathways toward making things right are agreed upon. Lastly, affective statements are personal expressions of feeling used in response to specific positive or negative behaviors of others.

**Restorative Practice Outcomes in Schools**

Numerous empirical studies report the implementation of RP in schools is associated with decreased office discipline referrals and suspensions (for a review see Fronius et al., 2019). A randomized control trial conducted in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania found that the number of suspensions and days lost to suspension decreased more significantly in the schools implementing RP as compared to the control schools (Augustine et al., 2018). Research from a middle school in Oakland, California indicated an 87-percent decrease in suspensions after two years of RP implementation and a continued 74-percent decrease during a two-year follow-up investigation (Davis; 2014; Sumner et al., 2010). Using data collected in Denver, Colorado, researchers further showed that students who participated in RP were less likely to receive a
discipline referral or suspension compared to students who were referred and did not take part in RP (Anyon et al., 2014; Gregory et al., 2017).

There is limited and mixed evidence that RP has an impact on school climate, academic achievement, and attendance (Fronius et al., 2019; Zakszeski & Rutherford, 2021). To illustrate, in the aforementioned randomized control trial conducted by Augustine and colleagues (2018), RP had a significant impact on teacher’s positive perceptions of school climate. In particular, teachers’ perceptions of school safety and teachers’ understanding of student conduct policies significantly increased in schools using RP relative to the control schools (Augustine et al., 2018). The results from a survey conducted in Oakland, California indicated that 69 percent of staff believed RP improved school climate (Jain et al., 2014). That said, only 40 percent of parents agreed with the previous statement. In addition, a cluster randomized control trial conducted by Acosta and colleagues (2019) in Maine did not find that student ratings of school climate improved with implementation of their RP intervention. Regarding academic outcomes, Jain and colleagues (2014) indicated that schools implementing RP saw a 128 percent increase in reading levels over three years while the schools not implementing RP only saw an 11 percent increase (note, however, this was not an experimental trial). Conversely, Augustine and colleagues (2018) did not observe an improvement in math and reading scores and state assessment scores actually decreased in the treatment schools at the middle school level. Finally, a review of research indicated that across several correlational studies, school attendance tended to improve after RP implementation (Fronius et al., 2019).

While RP has gained popularity, in part, as an alternative for exclusionary discipline, RP is also utilized in an effort to address disproportionate discipline outcomes. While few studies have evidenced eradication of the discipline gap, research has provided preliminary indications
that RP implementation led to reductions in disparate discipline outcomes (Fronius et al., 2019; Gregory et al., 2017). For example, research conducted by Hashim and colleagues (2018) in Los Angeles Unified School district demonstrated narrowing of race (Black, Latino, Asian, and White students) and disability-status discipline gaps. A reduction in the racial discipline gap between Black and White students was also observed in a randomized control trail comparing outcomes in 22 schools implementing RP and 22 control schools (Augustine et al., 2018). It is argued that a possible mechanism that drives narrowing of the discipline gap is the positive association between RP implementation and positive student-teacher relationships, consequently reducing teacher referrals for misbehavior (Fronius et al., 2019).

**Equity-Oriented Restorative Practices**

Given the usage of RP as means to address disproportionate discipline outcomes and limited evidence that RP can eliminate the discipline gap, scholars are beginning to explore “culturally conscious” modifications to standard models of RP (Archibold, 2016; Gregory et al., 2017). Culturally conscious implementation refers to an approach that considers the relationship between sociohistorical influence and present school discipline disparities (Gregory et al., 2017). These sociohistorical forces include history of racial and social class segregation as well as culturally-based judgements and perceptions of behavior (Gregory et al., 2017). Said differently, RP implementation alone may not fully address disproportionality and scholars have called for the need to explicitly focus attention on concerns of culture, race, gender, power, and privilege (Archibold, 2016; Gay, 2010; Gregory et al., 2017; Weinstein et al., 2004).

Other school-based frameworks including Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), and social-emotional learning (SEL) are experiencing a similar paradigm shift. PBIS is grounded in functional behavior assessment and emphasizes data-based decision making,
progress monitoring, early intervention, prevention, and the coordination of school activities and systems (Sugai & Horner, 2002). Culturally responsive PBIS (CRPBIS) generally follows the principles of culturally responsive education and encourages educators to harness students’ protective factors (Bal, 2018). Additionally, a research-based CRPBIS methodology called Learning Lab provides stakeholders with guidelines to develop genuine school-community partnerships and renovate existing behavioral support systems so that they are culturally responsive to diverse strengths, needs, and goals (Bal, 2018). Moreover, schools are utilizing SEL to teach students skills for the development of healthy identities, emotional management, empathy, supportive relationships, and responsible decision making (The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning [CASEL], 2020). In a similar manner as PBIS, it is argued that SEL implementation should encourage an equitable learning environment where students and adults feel their social identities and cultural values are respected (CASEL, 2020). Based on a review of research, interviews with partnered school districts, and lessons learned from a professional learning community for SEL and Equity leaders, CASEL compiled five insights for employing SEL to espouse educational equity (Schlund et al., 2020). The insights included prioritizing adult reflection about their social, emotional, and cultural competencies, elevating students’ cultural assets, voice, and agency, community partnership, and establishing SEL data strategies designed to undo inequities (Schlund et al., 2020).

Correspondingly, preliminary culturally-conscious or equity-focused models of RP have been proposed. A research-based framework for increasing equity in school discipline introduced by Gregory and colleagues (2017) incorporated concepts such as culturally relevant and responsive teaching, data-based inquiry for equity, and problem-solving approaches to discipline. In addition, a framework developed by Agudelo and colleagues (2021) strives to address racial
and ethnic disproportionality in the school-to-prison pipeline in the United States. This framework sets forth three strategies: improvement of school climate and school–student relationship, improvement of a school’s cultural humility and connectedness, and reduction of exclusionary discipline (Agudelo et al., 2021).

Despite this prior theorizing, there continues to be a need for a clear equity-focused RP model. I examined the aforementioned models of school-based equity-focused frameworks and, based on a review of literature, I developed a model for equity-oriented RP. The posited model (Figure 1) includes commonly utilized RP (e.g., affective statements/questions, proactive circles, restorative conferences, fair process) as they can provide a well-grounded foundation for equity-focused efforts (Archibold, 2016). I then identified three supplemental equity-oriented RP components: (a) equity-focused data analysis and progress monitoring, (b) social justice education, and (c) culturally responsive pedagogy. Furthermore, the model is represented as a cycle to exemplify that the equity-oriented components impact the manner in which RP is implemented and vice versa. The following section details how each of the three components may be used simultaneously with RP to possibly engender more equitable discipline outcomes in schools.
Equity-focused data analysis and progress monitoring. Data analysis and progress monitoring refers to schools collecting data on a range of discipline-related issues, including rates of suspensions, expulsions, school-related arrests, and referrals to law enforcement (Mandinach & Jackson, 2012). Data collection and examination of accountability data in schools may assist schools in their efforts to improve inequitable student outcomes. The data that is measured and tracked through monitoring is an indicator of outcomes that are valued. In McIntosh et al.’s (2013) correlational study of 217 schools, School Wide Positive Behavioral Support teams’ use of data was a statistically significant predictor of sustained implementation. The authors observed that the practice of regularly sharing data with the entire school staff likely
communicated administration’s commitment to high-quality implementation to achieve improved student outcomes. If applied to RP implementation, schools that consistently review discipline-related data across student groups may communicate commitment to equitable implementation.

To begin, data analysis and progress monitoring may be used to identify problems that may be contributing to disproportionate discipline referrals (Scott, Hirn, & Barber, 2012). In a case study of a Midwestern high school, a referral system that identified disproportionate referral rates for freshmen and ethnic minority students was implemented. During the first year of implementation, one of the researchers visited the school on a monthly basis to assist the school's administrative team in summarizing their discipline referral data. During the first month, referrals were graphed by time, location, ethnicity, and incident and shared at a meeting with school faculty. This data was used to identify predictor conditions of referrals and led to discussions around possible reasons for the predictors and strategies for reducing predictable problems.

During the second year of implementation, the referral data was also disaggregated for further analysis. For example, when ethnicity was found as a predictor, all referrals for ethnic minority students (all African American students) were further analyzed to determine the specific conditions of the referral (i.e., problems, times, locations). Graphs of this data were used by faculty to target interventions to the most predictable conditions. Furthermore, when data indicated that the hallway was a predictor location of behavioral concerns, staff reviewed the rules for hallway behavior, discussed how hallway rules would be communicated to students, and strategized how faculty would position themselves in the hallway. The school in this case study saw a reduction in office referrals for identified overrepresented groups. That said,
referrals for minority students did remain at a rate considered disproportionate at more than five times the rate White student discipline referrals. Although office discipline referrals were still disproportionate in the school, Scott and colleagues (2012) argued that given the steady decrease in referral rates for minority students, this case study demonstrates how data analysis can be used to look closely at the contextual contributors and target prevention efforts.

To further explore how data analysis can be used as a tool for attaining equity in schools, Fergus (2017) described a four step process for identifying disproportionality and building an equity plan using data. These steps include identifying the need for a root cause analysis, doing a root cause process for identifying disproportionality concerns, monitoring equity work, and progress-monitoring tools. Fergus (2017) defined a root cause analysis (RCA) as a “data and research-driven process for naming the causes of disproportionate patterns” (2017, page 74). Some concerns that districts may identify through an RCA include implementation of instruction that disproportionately affects groups of students, inconsistent referral processes, and limited beliefs of students’ ability. The data needed for an RCA can be collected using attendance records, classroom observation notes, behavioral referrals, and climate surveys. For school discipline data in particular, it is recommended that schools review the demographics of students involved in the school’s discipline process, the types of discipline infractions, the outcomes of those infractions, and the recidivism of suspensions. Establishing SMART (Specific, Measurable, Agreed Upon, Realistic, and Time-Based) goals can help teams identify data-based benchmarks that indicate progress and identify specific procedural changes that will need to occur. Fergus (2017) also highlighted the need to monitor equity work over a three- to five-year span.
Social justice education. Another domain of equity-oriented RP is social justice education. Social justice education refers to instruction that focuses on raising students’ critical consciousness about inequity in everyday aspects of life (Hammond, 2017). Furthermore, critical consciousness is an English translation of Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire’s term “conscientização,” meaning “learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality” (1970, p. 19). Scholars have begun developing and testing measures of critical consciousness. For example, a 17-item measure was used to reflect constructs of critical consciousness including consciousness of racism and inequality (5 items; “Racism and discrimination affect people today”), agency and motivation for making a difference (6 items; “There are ways that I can contribute to my community”), and participation in actions promoting equality or against discrimination (6 items; “I am involved in activities or groups that promote equality and justice;” McWhirter, 2016). McWhirter (2016) tested their measure of critical consciousness in two samples of Latinx adolescents, and found it was associated with greater levels of postsecondary plans and school/extracurricular engagement.

In schools implementing equity-oriented RP, social justice education may be used to inform students that school disciplinary policies are being applied disproportionately across groups as opposed to ignoring or minimizing underlying racism or blaming the students (Diemer et al., 2015). The premise is that social justice education may provide a lens to recognize and aid in interrupting inequitable patterns and practices in school discipline (Hammond, 2017). In some respects, social justice education mirrors youth participatory action research (YPAR), or a process that involves youth in gathering information about the conditions of their community and taking action towards shifting inequitable systems, policies, and practices (Cammarota & Fine,
A systematic review of YPAR research that included 63 studies published between 1995 and 2015 found that approximately 30% of studies reported youth outcomes related to critical consciousness (i.e., the ability to recognize injustices or inequalities in society; Anyon, et al., 2018).

**Culturally responsive pedagogy.** As schools in the United States were undertaking desegregation during the 1970s, teaching approaches that responded to culturally and linguistically diverse students began to develop (Gay, 1983). Interest in culturally responsive pedagogy increased during the mid-1990s (Rychly & Graves, 2012) and was defined by Gloria Ladson-Billings as “empower[ing] students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 16). Ladson-Billings described a framework for culturally relevant pedagogy that includes three components: academic achievement, cultural competence, and sociopolitical consciousness (1995). Academic achievement is in reference to student learning, knowledge, and skills gained as a result of pedagogical interactions with teachers (Ladson-Billings, 2006). Cultural competence pertains to the process by which teachers help students honor their cultural beliefs and practices while equipping students with the skills needed to navigate the education system (Ladson-Billings, 2006). Sociopolitical consciousness involves teachers first recognizing and understanding sociopolitical concerns regarding race, class, and gender to then incorporate critique of social inequalities in their teaching (Ladson-Billings, 1995)—a concept that echoes social justice education, as described above.

Richards and colleagues (2007) later described culturally responsive pedagogy across three dimensions; institutional, personal, and instructional. The institutional dimension refers to the physical and political structure of the school that may need to be reformed to better serve
students of diverse backgrounds (Little 1999; Richards et al., 2007). The personal dimension references teachers engaging in self-reflection to examine their attitude and beliefs towards others and biases that may influence their value system (Richards et al., 2007; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Finally, the instructional dimension refers to using tools of instruction that are compatible with the students’ cultural background (Richards et al., 2007). For example, tools of instruction may look like educating students about global diversity, validating students’ cultural identities with instructional materials, and encouraging student social and political consciousness (Richards et al., 2007).

Summary

In sum, while it may be expected that exclusionary discipline is associated with an improved climate for students, research has demonstrated its negative correlates (e.g., Bacher-Hicks et al., 2020). RP, or the use of informal and formal processes that proactively build relationships and a sense of community to prevent conflict and harm, is utilized as an alternative to exclusionary discipline. RP has roots in many cultures, and its Western roots began with restorative justice, which has transformed between 1970’s - 1990’s into the modern-day RP that are being implemented in schools today. The focus of RP in education is to emphasize relationship-based communities and replace punitive models of discipline with restorative models that promote repair of harm. RP in education aims to move away from systems of social control and move toward systems of social engagement (Gregory & Evans, 2020).

Numerous studies suggest that implementation of RP in schools is associated with decreases in office discipline referrals and suspensions (Fronius et al., 2019). Although the evidence is limited and mixed, preliminary research also indicates that RP may be associated with improved school climate, student attendance, and positive student-teacher relationships.
(Augustine et al., 2018; Fronius et al., 2019; Jain et al., 2014; Zakszeski & Rutherford, 2021). Additionally, schools are implementing RP as means to address disproportionate discipline outcomes as there is some evidence of the decline of exclusionary discipline rates across racial and ethnic groups with the use of RP (Augustine et al., 2018; González, 2015; Gregory & Clawson, 2016). Scholars are beginning to explore “culturally conscious” modifications to standard models of RP in order to explicitly address the disparities in school discipline, and preliminary culturally conscious or equity-focused models of school discipline and RP have been proposed (Agudelo et al., 2021; Gregory et al., 2017). That said, there continues to be a need for a clear model based on practitioner knowledge. Thus, the current study aims to refine a model of equity-oriented RP, that draws on prior theorizing (Agudelo et al., 2021; Bal, 2018; Gregory et al., 2017; Schlund et al., 2020) and builds upon it using practitioner knowledge. As a starting point, the hypothesized equity-oriented RP model includes equity-focused data analysis and progress monitoring, culturally responsive pedagogy, and social justice education. The current study explores the following aims and research questions:

**Aim 1: Examine a proposed model of equity-oriented RP.**

**Research question 1:**

To what degree do restorative justice coordinators implementing RP with an explicit focus on addressing racial and social justice describe the components of the Equity-Oriented Restorative Practices Model during yearly interviews?

**Hypothesis 1:**

It is predicted that restorative justice coordinators will identify all three equity-oriented components of the Equity-Oriented Restorative Practices Model (Figure 1) during yearly
equity-oriented restorative practices.

**Aim 2: Identify emergent findings and propose a revised model of equity-oriented RP.**

**Research question 2:** In what additional ways do restorative justice coordinators conceptualize equity-oriented restorative practices?

**Hypothesis 2:**

It is predicted that new component(s) of the Equity-Oriented Restorative Practices Model will emerge from restorative justice coordinators conceptualizations of restorative practice implementation.

**Methods**

**Participants**

With grant support from community-based organizations from a small regional foundation, three Restorative Justice Coordinators (RJC) and directors were employed in three different schools in a large urban district in the Northeastern United States. The RJC are part of the regional foundation’s four-year project to implement restorative justice with a primary goal to build a racially just model for disciplinary reform. The RJC are a purposeful sampling given their involvement and investment in equity initiatives. Purposeful sampling is a qualitative research technique through which individuals who are especially knowledgeable or experienced in the area of interest are intentionally selected (Palinkas et al., 2015). Thus, over the span of the project, the RJC implemented RP with an explicit focus on addressing racial and social justice. All three RJC are female and two of the RJCS are of an ethnic minority background.
Procedures

During late spring/early summer of each year of the four-year project (2016: Year 1 of the project, 2017: Year 2 of the project, 2018: Year 3 of the project, and 2019: Year 4 of the project), the Principal Investigator, Dr. Gregory, conducted interviews with three RJC. Thus, a total of 11 interviews totaling 201 pages are included in the current study. The audio-recorded semi-structured interviews took place over telephone and were approximately 1-hour in duration. All audio files were assigned an ID to ensure confidentiality. The interviews were later transcribed by a team of graduate students and all identifying information was removed.

The previously mentioned interviews were conducted as part of a larger mixed-method study that constituted youth and adult surveys and interviews. The objective of the study was to track participants’ perspectives of RP and visions for change in school over time (e.g., implementation strengths and challenges, quality and quantity of RP implementation). In addition, the Principal Investigator and a research assistant met with the RJC at the conception of this project to discuss preliminary measures, indicators of change, and approaches to integrate principles of restorative justice into the evaluation process itself. The Rutgers University Institutional Review Board (IRB) as well as the school district’s IRB approved the research.

Measures

Interview Protocol. The semi-structured interview protocol (Appendix A) is comprised of five sections: Background information, Implementing RJ in your school/Day to day realities, Equity and RJ practices, and Sustainability without the RJC. The purpose of these interviews was to systematically gather information on the RJC’s program models, training activities, school-based facilitators and obstacles to implementation, and progress in RP implementation. The
interviewer also aimed to understand why each RJC perceived their programming to be culturally responsive and racially just and gain implementation recommendations.

**Data analysis plan**

An a priori approach was utilized for data analysis. A priori refers to a process in which codes are predetermined or prefigured (Crabtree & Miller, 1999; Creswell, 2013). Coding may be based upon prior coding from related research or a theoretical construct (Crabtree & Miller, 1999). The present codes (Table 1) were derived from the three equity components of the theorized Equity-Oriented Restorative Practices Model: Code 1) Equity-Focused Data Analysis and Progress Monitoring, Code 2) Social Justice Education, Code 3) Culturally Responsive Pedagogy. The Culturally Responsive Pedagogy code was further divided into subcodes (Codes 3A and 3B) to capture two of the three dimensions defined by Richards and colleagues (2007): institutional and instructional. The third dimension, personal, overlapped with concepts already included in the Social Justice Education code, and therefore did not require a separate code.

As shown in the coding manual (Appendix B), an additional theme not included in the proposed Equity-Oriented RP Model was identified: Student Leadership and Voice. Creswell (2013) encouraged researchers to be open to emergent codes during analysis, noting a priori codes may limit the expansion of codes in a manner that reflects the true perspective of participants. Open coding is often referred to as a first step to coding whereby the researcher may identify distinct concepts by surveying the data for similar words and phrases (Williams & Moser, 2019). As such, I read a sample of four transcripts and allowed for emergent themes to arise. One theme was repeated in the sample across the three interviewees: Student Leadership and Voice. For the purposes of this study, *Student Leadership and Voice* is defined as the
concerns and opinions of students being solicited and youth having opportunities to lead RP initiatives.

Once the mutually exclusive codes were agreed upon with Dr. Anne Gregory, I trained a Rutgers undergraduate student and a Rutgers Research Project Director in a coding manual (Appendix B), and all 11 interviews were coded. Using the manual, each coder independently read all 11 transcripts with pre-highlighted sections of dialogue and then annotated which code the quote justified. Additionally, weekly meetings were held to allow for calibration between coders. If there was disagreement among coders, discussion took place to determine a consensus code. Some of the codes are dichotomous meaning 0 is used to represent the absence of a construct and 1 is used to represent its presence. Other codes are based on a three-point scale (e.g., 0, 1, 2). For example, with respect to the Social Justice Education code, a 0 represents the absence of the construct, a 1 signifies self-reflection, and a 2 represents the RJC engaging with others. Furthermore, codes may indicate constructs that are only conceptually part of the RJC’s RP initiatives. For instance, a passage could be coded if an RJC was considering future implementation of an equity component.

Intra-class correlation is a recommended measure of reliability, or consistency of the experimental method (Liljequist, 2019). For the purposes of the current study, three coders were provided an identical document with highlighted excerpts to independently code using an agreed upon manual (Appendix B). Then, intercoder agreement or intra-class correlation was calculated using SPSS. This is calculated as a ratio between unwanted variance and the variance of interest. Generally, an intra-class correlation value below 0.5 is seen as poor reliability and a value above 0.9 is seen as a sign of excellent reliability (Koo & Li, 2016). Values in-between 0.5 – 0.75 are generally seen as moderate reliability and between 0.75 – 0.9 suggest good reliability (Koo & Li,
2016). Intra-class correlation estimates were calculated on independent coding and are as follows: Code 1: Equity-Focused Data Collection (ICC = 0.96), Code 2: Social Justice Education (ICC = 0.77), Code 3A: Culturally-Responsive RP - Institutional Dimension (ICC = 0.76), Code 3B: Culturally-Responsive RP - Instructional Dimension (ICC = 0.73), Code 4: Student Leadership and Voice (ICC = 0.91). Taken together, the equity-oriented RP codes (Table 1) have moderate to excellent reliability.
Table 1

_Equity-Oriented Restorative Practices Codes_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Code Definition</th>
<th>Sample Interview Quote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Code 1.</strong> Equity-Focused Data Analysis and Progress Monitoring</td>
<td>Presence of statement endorsing the use of data analysis or progress monitoring and mentions a focus on equity.</td>
<td>“... Seeing who is suspended, who is disproportionally suspended, he took it upon himself to look. That’s not something that they really itemize. He was able to itemize, pull the report, the ORS to itemize.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Code 2.</strong> Social Justice Education</td>
<td>Self-Reflection Subcode: Presence of statement endorsing interviewee’s own critical consciousness or self-reflection in regard to inequities/injustices. Engaging with Others Subcode: Presence of statement endorsing teaching or engaging in conversations about social, political, and/or economic contradictions.</td>
<td>“... I think there is buy in ideologically to restorative justice, and racial equity, and belief in the value of shifting power and creating a more inclusive environment for young people... So, I think that is philosophical alignment.” “... We’ve been doing a lot of listening to relevant podcasts just to kind of build their knowledge base around issues currently taking place and to make connections a little bit stronger...”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Code 3A.</strong> Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: Institutional Dimension</td>
<td>Presence of statement endorsing RPs influence on the physical or political structure of the school to better serve students of diverse backgrounds.</td>
<td>“So, it was through those conversations or different groups that I ran asking questions of the disparity, of disproportion that we ... actually started to create some protocols to combat or at least handle some of these things.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Code 3B.</strong> Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: Instructional Dimension</td>
<td>Presence of statement endorsing RJC’s use of tools that are compatible with the students’ cultural backgrounds.</td>
<td>“We’re doing a lot of work on the Instructional Leadership Team on increasing conferencing as a tool for teachers to build relationships with students and identify strengths and identify lags in skills.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Code 4.</strong> Student Leadership and Voice</td>
<td>Opportunities to Share and Lead Subcode: Presence of statement endorsing that students’ concerns and opinions are solicited and/or students have opportunities to lead RP initiatives. Equity Lens Subcode: Presence of statement endorsing student leadership or voice as integral to equity initiatives.</td>
<td>“I would say it’s the same thing with young people like having their voices heard in an authentic way, and having their voices considered, and having an impact on decision making at the school.” “I think the student leadership is key because I still think it’s difficult to get adults to consistently want to engage in the conversations, in the work around equity especially when you talk about racial justice and racism.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results

The qualitative analysis examined the degree to which RJC\textsuperscript{s} described the components of the Equity-Oriented Restorative Practices Model during yearly interviews. Over the four years, RJC\textsuperscript{s} implementing RP with an explicit focus on addressing racial and social justice mentioned all four equity-oriented components of the proposed model. A total of 160 equity excerpts were identified from the 11 interviews and comprised (a) Social Justice Education \((n = 56, 35\%)\), (b) Culturally-Responsive Pedagogy: Institutional Dimension \((n = 37, 23\%)\), Student Leadership and Voice \((n = 36, 23\%)\), (c) Culturally-Responsive Pedagogy: Instructional Dimension \((n = 21, 13\%)\), Equity-Focused Data Collection and Progress Monitoring \((n = 10, 6\%)\). The results show that the RJC\textsuperscript{s} described the components of the Equity-Oriented RP Model to a great degree during yearly interviews. As demonstrated in Table 1, the results also reveal that several components were more emphasized during interviews when compared to others. Figure 2 displays the same data, depicting the percentages in a bar graph to visually compare RJC’s relative emphases of each component.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency and Percent Emphasis of Equity-Oriented RP Components Mentioned by RJC\textsuperscript{s}</th>
<th>RJC\textsuperscript{1}</th>
<th>RJC\textsuperscript{2}</th>
<th>RJC\textsuperscript{3}</th>
<th>All RJC\textsuperscript{s}</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1: Equity-Focused Data Analysis</strong></td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2: Social Justice Education</strong></td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Reflection Subcode</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaging with Others Subcode</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3A: CR Pedagogy: Institutional Dimension</strong></td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3B: CR Pedagogy: Instructional Dimension</strong></td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4: Student Leadership and Voice</strong></td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities to Share Subcode</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity Lens Subcode</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As shown in Figure 1, Equity-Focused Data Collection was the least mentioned component and Social Justice education was the most mentioned as the solid line shows the average percentage that each equity code was identified across all three RJC s. That said, the relative focus on each component during interviews varied between RJC s. For example, in looking at the Student Leadership and Voice code, it comprised 28% of RJC 1’s equity codes whereas it comprised 19% for RJC 3 which is a nine percentage point difference. The least variation among RJC s was seen with the Data Analysis and Progress Monitoring and Student Leadership and Voice components (7% difference), and the most variation was observed with both the Social Justice Education and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: Institutional Dimension components (16% difference). The following sections expand upon the insights provided by the
RJs with respect to each of the equity components and the quotes that were chosen are most representative of each code.

**Equity-Focused Data analysis and progress monitoring.** The Equity-Focused Data Analysis and Progress Monitoring component pertains to the RJs gathering data on a variety of discipline-related concerns (e.g., suspensions, expulsions, school-related arrests) with a focus on addressing disproportionality. This component was least reported by all three RJs as compared to the other equity components (4 – 11%). That said, the coordinators discussed the utility of exploring disaggregated data and using it as a tool for conversation. As one RJC stated,

> So, I think that it will be upon us next year to really have that practice of looking at the disproportionality data and engaging with it. I think engaging with it in the professional learning community this year was really powerful, and we need to expand that, so it is not just like a couple of people, but we’re really having broader conversations about our data.

This coordinator found such value in engaging other staff with disproportionality data that she was considering the need to similarly reach more staff using data.

The RJs also commented on looking closely at discipline data and considering the specific trends that surround exclusionary discipline. For example, another RJC mentioned,

> This year, one of the deans ... was able to take the ORS report and separate, like really break it down, down to see who is being suspended. How are they being suspended?

> When they’re being suspended.

In addition, the RJs spoke about using data to inform tiered interventions and school procedures. One RJC specified,
I would really like to see like I said, a task force to really take look at our tier two and tier three interventions, so I gather data on it and to come up with a collaborative plan for developing protocols.

**Social Justice Education.** This component refers to instruction that focuses on raising students’ and other school stakeholders’ (e.g. teachers, administration, support staff) critical consciousness about inequity in everyday aspects of life. For two of the three RJC s, *Social Justice Education* was the most reported component as compared to the other equity components (32 – 44%). The Social Justice Education comprises two subcodes, Rating 1: *Self-Reflection* and Rating 2: *Engaging with Others*, which will be discussed in more detail below (see Table 3).

Table 3

| Frequency and Percent Emphasis of Social Justice Education Code and Subcodes |
|---------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
|                                 | RJC1   | RJC2   | RJC3   | All RJC |
|                                 | Count  | %      | Count  | %      | Count  | %      |
| 2: Social Justice Education, Rating 1: Self-reflection | 6      | 40%    | 10     | 38%    | 5      | 33%    | 21     | 38%    |
| 2: Social Justice Education, Rating 2: Engaging with Others | 9      | 60%    | 16     | 62%    | 10     | 67%    | 35     | 62%    |
| Total                          | 15     |        | 26     |        | 15     |        | 56     |        |

**Social Justice Education, Self-Reflection.** The first Social Justice subcode, *Self-Reflection*, refers to RJC s demonstrating their own critical consciousness or self-reflection in regard to inequities, injustices, etc. The *Self-Reflection* subcode comprised the minority of Social Justice Education excerpts across all three RJC s (33 – 40%). One RJC highlighted the importance of “ideological buy-in” or “philosophical alignment” during the last year of the project, implicating that equity-focused work may require a specific lens through which an implementer looks at the school. An RJC reported:
I think it’s about adults having to check their privilege and that’s whether they’re people of color or not. I think we all have privilege to some extent but obviously racial privilege is I think one of the greater focuses of the work that I do in restorative justice but at the same time you know I think it’s racial, I think it’s gender, I think it’s cultural, I think it’s… There are so many ways that you can look at privilege...

In this excerpt, the RJC illustrated how her focus regarding power and privilege is intertwined with her implementation of RP. Below, another RJC touches upon bias and systematic racism in the education system which further demonstrates the practitioners’ own critical consciousness. She reported,

And so, I think that that is foundational and cutting through the bias that I think really leads to kind of the situation that we’re in around schools (inaudible) and our African American and Latino young men, our students in special education, our LGBT youth getting targeted disproportionately. A lot of that is about educator bias. That comes from being in a system that’s not actually set up to see people for who they are...

Furthermore, the *Self-Reflection* subcode pertained to the RJC’s reflecting on how their own upbringing or worldviews can impact their interactions with faculty and students. For example, one RJC mentioned,

There’s also culture that comes from neighborhood culture, community culture and these particular girls were from the [omitted] area. And it was very much about, “Well we still got to fight ‘cause we got to fight.” And that was very hard for me to understand. And then I had to step back and I’m like, “Oh okay, this is over your head. And instead of you trying to tell them this is how they should do things, you let it be.” I still find it interesting but as I’m talking to you about it, I’m becoming aware of like a (inaudible)
culture how they still handle conflict and I’m trying to not impose but show another way
to handle conflict and they still want to go with what they’re used to.

Here we can see the RJC demonstrate how she reflects on her perspective in comparison to the
outlook of students from the neighborhood in which she works. She is cautious not to foreground
her views on conflict resolution and shut down the ideas of her students while still
acknowledging the difficulty she had understanding them in this instance.

**Social Justice Education, Engaging with Others.** The second subcode of Social Justice
Education, *Engaging with Others*, refers to the RJC teaching or engaging in conversations about
social, political, and economic contradictions. The *Engaging with Others* subcode made up the
majority of Social Justice Education excerpts across all three RJC (60 – 67%). Throughout the
years of interviews, RJC illustrated innovative ways that they engaged in social justice
education during workshops, community-building events, and professional development. For
instance, one RJC said,

> We had the poetry slam again, we had a Power and Privilege Workshop, we had, We
> Wear the Masks so, “What does it look like to have different versions of yourself
> presented in different spaces and places?” and they actually created masks that showed
> the visual on the outside but then they created art on the inside of the mask that was more
> reflective of who they were in the sense that the outside world doesn’t get to see it.

While the RJC above incorporated art to visually represent how power and privilege can
manifest in different settings, the following excerpt from another RJC is an example of a more
direct approach. She mentioned,

> We are building our ability to have more direct conversations around racial justice,
> around bias. And we’re really planting the seeds towards that work. And I think that
that’s important, because I think that-I just did a training with some administrators and we-I showed a video on implicit bias. There’s this Ted Talk Verna Myers does on how to overcome implicit bias. And I think a lot of the things that she talks about to me is restorative practices. And so, I’ve been trying to kind of make those connections.

To reiterate, although the RJC s used different methods to engage their school communities in social justice education, the Engaging with Others subcode was most reported. Also notable, one RJC explicitly mentioned the connection between engaging their school community in these activities to critical consciousness; “I think the increase in critical consciousness has happened and cultural consciousness and communication has happened.”

Culturally-Responsive Pedagogy: Institutional Dimension. The Institutional Dimension refers to changes made to the physical and political structure of the school in an effort to better serve students of diverse backgrounds. The frequency of this dimension varied across the three RJC s (15 – 31%). They discussed being intentional about systematically integrating RP and culturally responsive education and ensuring the discipline procedures reflect “the restorative nature of the people in the building.” One RJC indicated,

... But I’d really like to take a look at our discipline policies and procedures to be formalized. I think that we have some things that are kind of restorative in nature, but I think it’s because they’re not really formalized, and we don’t have total clarity amongst staff around what our discipline procedure are.

Two years later, the same RJC described how she was able to link culturally responsive education and RP. She described,

...In the Spring she gathered a team of people to really do some work diving into restorative practices and culturally responsive education. Because we’re really
intentional around marrying those two, joining restorative practices and culturally responsive education. And so, we dug into the restorative practice principles, read those together, and really discussed what it would look like and feel like if those were alive in our school. How we would model and demonstrate that. We read some articles on like growth mindset, on culturally responsive education, and we planned on unveiling with staff for the PD days in June.

**Culturally-Responsive Pedagogy: Instructional Dimension.** This dimension of culturally-responsive pedagogy refers to practices that validate students’ cultural identity including classroom and school-wide practices, and instructional materials. The frequency of the instructional dimension varied across the three RJC’s (9 – 21%). Overall, RJC’s gave examples of classroom and school-wide practices that validated students’ cultural identities like tying in current events, incorporating art, music, poetry, rigorous/challenging curriculum, spirit weeks, tailored circle prompts, etc. For example, one RJC stated,

...Classroom content needs to be culturally and socially relevant. So, making sure that there’s a way to kind of conference, to make sure all voices are heard in the construction of classroom content. Making sure that students are able to reach those levels of rigor because they’re the level of engagement that is set first. And the engagement I think comes from it being relevant. So, material that pertains to their lives that they can actually use, that they can see how they can use it along the way are all things that are important to me.

Below, another RJC described how she utilized most of a pre-existing curriculum but fine-tuned it with her school and students in mind. She remarked,
What I would do when I was making curriculum or pulling curriculum, and-, and you
know kind of crafting it towards the students at [redacted] was still use basically 80
percent of the curriculum. But I would change things like (the) opening sometimes I
would also change... the check-in questions. Also, if something happened at the school or
that has been going on in the news, I would try to do a lesson around that. So, we want to
be mindful of what we’re doing so it can fold nicely into the school and the kids.

**Student Leadership and Voice.** As student voice can often go underrepresented in
schools, this component refers to efforts to elevate student input and leadership. This component
varied some across the three RJC's, (19– 28%). The Student Leadership and Voice code is
comprised of two subcodes, Rating 1: *Opportunities to Lead* and Rating 2: *Equity Lens*, which
will be discussed in more detail below (see Table 4).

Table 4

<p>| Frequency and Percent Emphasis of Student Leadership and Voice Code and Subcodes |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>RJC1</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>RJC2</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>RJC3</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>All RJC</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4: Student Leadership and Voice, Rating 1: <em>Opportunities to share and lead</em></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4: Student Leadership and Voice, Rating 2: <em>Equity lens</em></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>22%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>36</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Student Leadership and Voice, Rating 1: *Opportunities to share and lead*.** The first
rating, *Opportunities to Lead*, refers to students’ concerns and opinions are solicited and/or
opportunities to lead RP initiatives. This subcode comprised the majority of Student Voice
excerpts across all three RJC's (69 - 85%). The RJC's mentioned the importance of student voice
and leadership, and being “responsive to student needs.” In the following excerpt, one RJC
portrayed how students led restorative circles, one of the processes that is integral to RP. She reported,

What did come out of it which was really great though was that I had some seniors and juniors in some of my circles who would actually lead the conversation. Would actually lead. I would give them some of the talking points and they would lead their side of their group.

During the same year, this RJC also expanded on plans to formally train youth to co-facilitate restorative circles. She commented,

I’m supposed to have five to eight kids come the last week of July, first week of August to do some circle training. These are all kids who have been in my advisory or been in advisory at the school and my thought is to do two days of circle keeping training and two days of restorative approach training. And the goal was for when they come back they’ll be co-keeping with some of the staff that are going to be running circles during the day.

**Student Leadership and Voice, Rating 2: Equity Lens.** This second rating is similar to the previous in that it is also pertains to students having opportunities to voice their opinions and lead RP initiatives. That said, the *Equity Lens* rating was used for instances when the RJC's conceptualized student leadership or voice as integral to equity initiatives and a mechanism for more equitable outcomes. Across all three RJC's, the *Equity Lens* rating was the minority of Student Voice excerpts (15 – 33%). One RJC commented on how student voice can be used to leverage equity work in schools when staff may be more hesitant to broach sensitive topics. She stated:
I think the student leadership is key because I still think it’s difficult to get adults to consistently want to engage in the conversations, in the work around equity especially when you talk about racial justice and racism and the more challenging topics to discuss, the more sensitive stuff to discuss. But I think that if we build up the student voice around that and the students’ awareness of what equity looks like and feels like, then they can advocate for it and they can point it out in places that they see it or places where they don’t and make the staff get involved in a way that they otherwise might not or shy away from.

When this RJC was asked if her sense of what equity means shifted since the project began almost four years ago, she expanded,

I think it’s kind of like what I mentioned about it being about putting more of the focus on student advocacy so that they can shine light on these things that are not equitable... Because I think they hold people’s feet to the fire when they are personally affected by it and they witness it or when they hear about students being victimized by it, I think they bring awareness to it. And what I do believe is that if the students take the leadership in the school, it’s taken seriously, and it’s addressed. So, I feel like the shift has been for me not so much to drill, drill, drill with the staff...

This excerpt demonstrates that student voice can be valuable for equity efforts as students personalize the work by calling attention to the inequities in their building.

**Findings across years**

Mention of *Culturally-Responsive Pedagogy: Instructional Dimension* remained relatively stable across all four years (11 – 15%). In 2016, *Culturally-Responsive Pedagogy: Institutional Dimension* comprised 34% of equity-oriented RP components that were reported. This fell to
12% of reported equity components by 2019. Also notable, there was an uptick in reported

*Student Leadership and Voice* during the last year of the project (2019). As one RJC commented,

> A lot of the feedback and dialogue that happened in those circles was calling for increased student voices. The instructional cabinet and the community school team when we debrief-- that was really latched onto. I think everybody kind of had "Aha" moment around student voice. A lot of dialogue was had around how to increase that for next year.

Figure 3

*Percent Emphasis of Equity-Oriented RP Components Across Four Years*
Discussion

The present study examined interviews of RJC s in three secondary schools to determine the degree to which there was field- and data-based support for a proposed Equity-Oriented RP Model. It was hypothesized that RJC s would identify all three originally proposed components of the model (Equity-Focused Data Analysis and Progress Monitoring, Social Justice Education, and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy) during yearly interviews. It was also hypothesized that RJC s would describe additional equity-oriented components. This study demonstrated that RJC s implementing RP with an explicit focus on addressing racial and social justice mentioned all components of the proposed model year after year. In particular, looking at a total of 11 interviews from a four-year project, the RJC s mentioned Equity-Focused Data Analysis and Progress Monitoring ten times, Social Justice Education 56 times, and the Institutional Dimension of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy 37 times and the Instructional Dimension of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy 21 times. Furthermore, an additional component, Student Leadership and Voice, was identified through a process by which four sample interviews were carefully reviewed, allowing for emergent findings. The Student Leadership and Voice component was mentioned a total of 36 times during yearly interviews. Expressed differently, the equity-oriented components were mentioned to a great degree during yearly interviews. This finding demonstrates the multifaceted nature of equity work and echoes the recommendations of Gregory and Evans (2020) regarding taking a comprehensive approach to RP in education.

While all of the proposed equity components were identified by RJC s, several components were more emphasized when compared to others. Three trends stood out in particular. First, Social Justice Education was the most reported equity-oriented RP component for two out of three RJC s. Second, there was increased mention of the Student Leadership and
Voice component over the span of the four-year project. Finally, the Equity-focused Data Analysis and Progress Monitoring was the least reported component across all three RJC's. With these trends in mind, it should also be noted that relative emphasis of each component varied across the RJC's. For example, the Student Leadership and Voice code comprised 28% of equity codes mentioned by RJC 1 while it comprised 19% of equity codes mentioned by RJC 3. This variation between coordinators may point to the need for practitioners to adapt implementation to fit best with their setting and corroborates recommendations for RP to accommodate the strengths and needs of a specific environment (Gregory & Evans, 2020).

Social Justice Education

As mentioned previously, Social Justice Education was the most mentioned equity-oriented RP component. This may indicate that RJC's conceptualize Social Justice Education as a central element of implementing RP with an equity lens. One might speculate that engaging in activities that foster the development of critical consciousness in students and other school stakeholders may be a mechanism for more equitable discipline outcomes as it may be foundational for intervening appropriately. Carter and colleagues (2017) drew the comparison between a school district attempting to address low reading achievement scores without being able to discuss reading and a district trying to address racial discipline disparities without talking about race. Carter et al. (2017) argued that dialogue around inequity is necessary to consider the steps to confront it. During interviews, RJC's gave specific examples regarding how they integrated this type of dialogue during workshops, community-building events, and professional development. Therefore, training in equity-oriented RP might cover a wide variety of Social Justice Education activities that implementers may choose from based on appropriateness for their setting.
The *Social Justice Education* component comprised two subcodes: *Self-Reflection* and *Engaging with Others*. While the *Self-Reflection* subcode comprised a minority of the overall *Social Justice Education* component, it accounted for more than one third of this component which is a sizable portion and points to its significance. Therefore, practitioners looking to implement RP with an equity-focused lens may consider using self-reflective prompts to help think through their worldviews and the impact it can have on their approach to the work.

**Student Leadership and Voice Over Time**

After closely reviewing a sample of interviews, *Student Leadership and Voice* was identified as an additional component mentioned by RJC's implementing RP with a racial and social justice lens. In looking at the entire sample, the *Student Leadership and Voice* component was mentioned 23% of the time and interestingly, mention of this component increased substantially during the last year of the project. Perhaps, similar to what an RJC mentioned, after being in the field, practitioners saw how student voice can be used to leverage equity initiatives. This may point to a need for developmental integration of *Student Leadership and Voice*. For example, a practitioner may start off with eliciting students’ thoughts and opinions. Next, more focus may go to training students and finally, students can get involved with leadership roles and running RP and equity initiatives. Furthermore, *Student Leadership and Voice* may be an important mechanism for more equitable outcomes because as revealed during interviews, students can create buy-in for equity-focused efforts by citing personal experience of injustices in schools. Also, RJC's mentioned the utility of students sustaining the work through advocacy and leadership.
Equity-Focused Data Analysis and Progress Monitoring

Also notable, the Equity-Focused Data Analysis and Progress Monitoring component was the least mentioned component across all three RJC's. This may have occurred simply because the RJC's tended not to conceptualize data and progress monitoring as a crucial part of equity-focused efforts. Alternatively, the RJC's may have encountered barriers commonly faced by practitioners using data in schools including a lack of time to collect, analyze, and interpret data, and insufficient training in data use and analysis (North Central Regional Educational Laboratory [NCREL], 2004). Without adequate training, it may be difficult to identify what data to collect, manage and organize the data, and eventually analyze and interpret it (NCREL, 2004). Although this component was not reported frequently during yearly interviews, RJC's did highlight using disaggregated data as a tool to talk about disproportionate discipline. Additional training in the area of Equity-Focused Data Analysis and Progress Monitoring could be important for supporting practitioners with identifying trends in data and effectively present said trends to school stakeholders.

Updated Equity-Oriented RP Model

In pulling together the aforementioned findings, this study offers an updated version (Figure 4) to the originally proposed Equity-Oriented RP Model (Figure 1). Unlike the original model, the newer version displays RP in Tiers as the field is moving towards mapping RP onto multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS; Gregory et al., 2021). Tier 1 involves universal community-building practices, Tier 2 comprises more targeted supports like restorative questions and responsive circles and, Tier 3 includes intensive RP interventions like restorative conferences (Gregory et al., 2021). As it is displayed in Figure 4, tiered RP serves as a foundation to five additional equity-oriented components for practitioners who are implementing
RP and aiming to address disparities in discipline. The updated figure offers sample activities that can be used to engage in each component that were gathered from yearly interviews with RJC.
Figure 4

*Updated Model of Equity-Oriented Restorative Practices*

**EQUITY-ORIENTED COMPONENTS**

**Tier 1 Restorative Practices:** Affective Statements, Proactive Circles, Fair Process

**Tier 2 Restorative Practices:** Restorative Questions, Responsive Circles

**Tier 3 Restorative Practices:** Restorative Conferences

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**Equity-focused Data Collection and Progress Monitoring**

**Description:** Gathering data on a variety of discipline-related concerns (e.g., suspensions, expulsions, school-related arrests) with a focus on addressing disproportionality.

**Sample Activities:**
- Explore disaggregated data
- Explore trends that surround exclusionary discipline incidents
- Use data to engage school stakeholders in efforts to address discipline gaps/build buy-in

**Social Justice Education**

**Description:** Instruction that focuses on raising students' and other school stakeholders' critical consciousness about inequity in everyday aspects of life.

**Sample Activities:**
- Practitioner self-reflection and approach to RP with an equity-focused lens
- Training, workshops, and professional development about racial and social justice

**Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: Institutional Dimension**

**Description:** Changes made to the physical and political structure of the school in effort to better serve students of diverse background.

**Sample Activities:**
- Ensure discipline procedures reflect restorative principles
- Ensure policy reflects a strengths-based approach
- Professional development in restorative practices and culturally responsive education

**Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: Instructional Dimension**

**Description:** Practices that validate students' cultural identity including classroom and school-wide practices, and instructional materials.

**Sample Activities:**
- Tie current events, art, music, and/or poetry into circle prompts
- Fine-tune curriculum to strengths and needs of students
- Hold school-wide cultural events/spirit weeks

**Student Voice and Leadership**

**Description:** Solicitation of students' concerns and opinions and students provided opportunities to lead RP initiatives.

**Sample Activities:**
- Provide opportunities for students to share their opinion
- Train students in restorative practices and allow them to facilitate circles
- Use student advocacy to leverage equity initiatives/build buy-in
Study Limitations

The limitations of the present study should be considered while interpreting the data and considering directions for future research. First, the study was conducted with a small sample of RJC s ($n = 3$) and therefore, reported trends should be considered cautiously. A larger sample of RJC s may have resulted in different or additional trends. Future research would benefit from a larger RJC sample to represent a broader range of perspectives and improve generalizability.

Also, the participants were purposefully selected by virtue of their equity lens so results may not generalize to RP practitioners who do not have this perspective. Future research may explore a developmental approach to implementation of the equity-oriented components as RJC s in the present study may have a “leg up” given their involvement and investment in equity work. For example, in regard to Social Justice Education, an RJC may need to focus on the Self-Reflection prior to Engaging with Others instead of carrying out the two sub-components simultaneously.

Furthermore, single-informant bias is a concern for the present study as all participants were RJC s, thus they shared the same role in their respective buildings. Future research could include the perspectives of other school stakeholders (e.g., students, teachers, administration) to better capture the components for equity-oriented RP. In addition, future research would benefit from the incorporation of additional methods for data collection and analysis. For example, the addition of an equity-oriented RP survey to the interviews would combine qualitative and quantitative methods.

Finally, the study’s design does not allow for causal claims regarding the proposed Equity-Oriented RP Model and disproportionate outcomes. Said differently, it is unknown if implementation of the proposed model would result in more equitable outcomes as compared to
traditional models of RP. Future research should compare the models across multiple areas of student outcomes (e.g., exclusionary discipline, academic performance, perceptions of school climate).

**Future Directions and Implications for Practice**

Given the field’s current interest in making modifications to standard models of RP to address the discipline gap, the current study provides a clear equity-oriented model that is derived from prior theorizing and practitioner knowledge. As hypothesized, this study demonstrated that RJC's implementing RP with an explicit focus on addressing racial and social justice mentioned all components of the proposed model year after year. *Social Justice Education* was the most reported component for two of the three RJC's and was overall the most reported equity-oriented component. While this points to the importance of *Social Justice Education*, some practitioners may not be able to engage in this component due to several states having recently prohibited instruction around Critical Race Theory (CRT), defined as the critique that racism remains entrenched in systems and policies (Ledesma & Calderón, 2015). Practitioners who are not able to explicitly engage in *Social Justice Education* may choose to utilize other components as permitted by their state legislature and advocate for legislative change. For example, the *Student Voice and Leadership* component does not inherently include discussions around racism yet, it may still contribute to a more equitable environment.

While the study is single-informant, single-method and has a small sample size, this research offers the field additional steps that can be used with intentions to address the discipline gap. The proposed model can influence RP training topics, guide RP implementation, and inform future research on equity-focused interventions. For example, to advance equity efforts in schools, RP training topics might include how to analyze trends surrounding exclusionary
discipline, ways to engage in social justice education, and how to involve students in leadership roles. The field may also benefit from RP curriculum developed from the proposed Equity-Oriented RP Model. Further examination of the equity-focused components is necessary to gain perspectives of other school stakeholders, and to compare outcomes of this equity-focused model to traditional models of RP.

**Conclusion**

The current study offers a model of RP that integrates equity-oriented components specifically to address disparate discipline outcomes. Qualitative analyses revealed three RJC's implementing RP with an explicit focus on addressing racial and social justice mentioned the following equity-oriented components: Equity-Focused Data Analysis and Progress Monitoring, Social Justice Education, Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: Institutional Dimension, Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: Instructional Dimension, and Student Leadership and Voice. Further consideration of trends also revealed that the Social Justice Education component was most mentioned and reference to the Student Leadership and Voice component increased during the final year of the project. Further research should investigate outcomes when implementing this equity-focused model as compared to RP without modifications.

Given the RJC's endorsement of the proposed components during yearly interviews, findings demonstrate that schools may espouse a multidimensional approach to tackling disproportionate discipline concerns. To illustrate, implementing equity-oriented RP may include exploring disaggregated data, holding workshops about racial and social justice, ensuring policy reflects a strength-based approach, and giving students opportunities to lead RP initiatives. Results on the varying relative emphasis of the components across the RJC's and their schools
also suggest that practitioners should apply components in a manner that is responsive to the needs of the setting.
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International Conference on Conferencing, Circles and other Restorative Practices, Manchester, England, UK.


Appendix A

*RJC Interview Protocol*

**Section 1: Background**

If we have not interviewed him or her ask the following:

1. What is your role in implementing RJ in the school?
2. What is RJ in your opinion? What does it include or not include?
3. Why did you become involved in RJ? What is your prior training in the area?

**Section 2A: Implementing RJ in your school**

1. What has worked in implementing RJ in your school in the last school year?
2. What has not worked in implementing RJ in your school in the last school year?
3. How have you confronted the obstacles?
4. What kinds of strategies have you used to overcome the obstacles?
5. Has there been an openness to doing RJ from administrators? From teachers? From other school staff? From students? Has that changed over the past several years or remained about the same?
   - What helped increase that “openness”? What gets in the way?
   - Your thoughts on staffs’ “readiness for change”?
6. Please open the 11 indicators check list:
   a. In the past year, what aspect of RJ programming has made the most inroads? Why did you select those?
   b. What aspect of RJ programming has made the least in-roads? Why did you select those?
7. What types of RJ programming is needed the most at this point? Why?

Section 2B: Day to day realities

8. With students, how do you handle time constraints in the school day and still try to use restorative justice (e.g., run shorter mediations, limit use of longer circles)?
   - How has the RJ work fit into your school given stressors/challenges or the flood of other initiatives?

9. Please describe an incident that resulted in a “restorative process” or resolution?

10. Can you describe a time when you thought an RJ practice was used in a high-quality way? What made it “high quality”? What about a time when it was done in a “low quality” way?

11. Is RJ connecting to other types of programs or initiatives in the school?
   - In what ways is it connecting to similar initiatives? (e.g., trauma informed care? Peer group connection? TAC-D?)

Section 4. Equity and RJ practices

- To what extent does RJ in this school try to increase racial and social justice? If so, how does it?
  - Does your current RJ program address issues of power and privilege adequately?

- How much have you made in-roads related to social justice and equity in the school?

- Has your sense of what that means shifted since the project began?

- What are you might proud of in the equity-oriented work there?

- What are you most disappointed about?

- Where do you see this type of work going in the coming years?
Section 5: Sustainability without the RJ Coordinator

- The grant-funded project is entering its last year. What do you think needs to be done to ensure sustainability of the work?
- What kind of leadership is needed?
- What will need to be picked up once the grant-funded RJ Coordinator is gone?
- What would you see in your school in several years to indicate there has been substantial change?
Appendix B

Equity-Oriented Restorative Practices Coding Manual

Instructions for Manual Use

Some of the codes in this manual are dichotomous meaning 0 is used to represent the absence of a construct and 1 is used to represent its presence. Other codes are based on a three-point scale (e.g., 0, 1, 2). Using the codes in this manual, please read the entirety of the interview and assign a code to the highlighted sections of dialogue by annotating which code the quote justifies.

Code 1: Equity-Focused Data Analysis and Progress Monitoring

Data analysis and progress monitoring can be used to identify problems that can contribute to disproportionate discipline referrals (Scott, Hirn, & Barber, 2012). Interviewees do not need to use the exact phrase “data analysis” in order to receive this code. For example, the interviewee may instead mention reviewing reports, looking at student records, or administering surveys.

Coding Scheme

0- RJC does not discuss using data analysis.

1- Highly indicative of using data to inform RP implementation, school discipline policy/procedures and/or school climate reform. RJC mentions the use of data and a focus on equity. This may include discussion around disaggregating data by sub-populations or discussion about how data was used to inform equitable decision making.

99- Not enough information provided.

Examples of 1s
• We don’t have racial justice issues; you know all of that. So, this particular dean who is the head dean, Dean E, I think after talking to him so much and seeing who is suspended, who is disproportionally suspended, he took it upon himself to look. That’s not something that the really itemize. He was able to itemize, pull the report, the ORS to itemize.

  o This excerpt is considered a 2 because the RJC discusses looking at who is being disproportionately suspended, which is equity oriented. Although the RJC does not explicitly state the word “data”, I can assume they are talking about data using context provided by words like “itemize” and “report”.

• Yes. So, we did use [data], and this is something that my supervisor wanted our report to reflect your findings, and kind of focus in on those areas. So, that’s what she thought would be the best use of kind of putting this year together. Like, let’s see what’s lacking what came out of the report, so we can attack those areas, right? Now, regarding the LGBTQ community at the school, and I did mention my student earlier... So, last year we had an ally staff member who decided they would run the LGBTQ club for the school.

  o The RJC is discussing reflecting on data and addressing disproportionate outcomes (LGBTQ community).

**Code 2: Social Justice Education**

Social justice education refers to instruction that focuses on raising students’ and/or faculty’s critical consciousness about inequity in everyday aspects of life (Hammond, 2017). Furthermore, critical consciousness is an English translation of Brazilian educator, Paolo Freire’s term “conscientização,” meaning “learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality” (1970, p. 19).
Raising critical consciousness may also include engaging in self-reflection to examine one’s own background, attitudes and beliefs and the impact those factors may have on interactions with others (Richards et al. 2007; Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

**Coding Scheme**

0- RJC does not discuss ways in which there is inequity in everyday aspects of life or engaging in social justice education.

1- RJC demonstrates their own critical consciousness and/or self-reflection but does not discuss engaging in social justice education with students and/or faculty.

2- Highly indicative of engaging in social justice education with students and/or faculty.

  RJC mentions teaching or engaging in conversations about social, political, and economic contradictions.

99- Not enough information provided.

**Examples of 1s**

- ...When culture comes up, there’s still a culture in the building of “we’re colorblind.” And this is coming from the adults in the building, and “we’re all one”. So, when they say things like that or they try and focus on “we’re all one” and colorblind, that to me is a little dismissive of cultural differences, economic, gender-like everything, and everything left out.

  - Here, the RJC demonstrates their own critical consciousness by discussing concerns with school faculty being colorblind. However, the RJC does not mention engaging in conversations with faculty about this concern.

**Examples of 2s**
• So, having discussions in circles around toxic masculinity or current events regarding policing of our neighborhoods what criminalization of black and brown students looks like inside school and outside school, how to organize themselves. We’ve been doing a lot of we’ve been doing a lot of listening to relevant podcasts just to kind of build their knowledge base around issues currently taking place and to make connections a little bit stronger...

  ○ *The RJC demonstrates critical consciousness and using podcasts to engage in social justice education with others the school.*

**Code 3: Culturally Responsive Pedagogy**

Culturally responsive pedagogy was defined by Geneva Gay (2002) as “using cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively” (Gay, 2002, p. 106). Richards et al. described culturally responsive pedagogy as being comprised of three dimensions; intuitional, personal, and instructional (2007). The personal dimension overlaps with concepts included in the Social Justice Education and have been incorporated above.

**Code 3A: Institutional Dimension (Culturally Responsive RP implementation)**

The institutional dimension refers to the physical and political structure of the school that may need to be reformed to better serve students of diverse backgrounds (Richards et al. 2007; Little, 1999). This dimension includes at least three areas in which an institution can become more culturally responsive: its organization, policies and procedures, and community involvement (Little, 1999). In the context of schools, organization can include administrative structure as well as the school’s usage and arrangement of physical space to better serve diverse students. Policies and procedures include the school’s policies and practices that impact the
delivery of services to diverse students. Community involvement refers to the school allocating resources to incorporating parents and other individuals from the community.

**Coding Scheme**

0 - Absence of statement endorsing RPs influence on the physical or political structure of the school to better serve students of diverse backgrounds.

1 - Presence of statement endorsing RPs influence of the physical or political structure of the school to better serve students of diverse backgrounds.

99 - Not enough information provided.

**Sample 1s**

- So, I feel like the disciplinary process definitely increased commitment to reducing punitive measures. I don’t think that that’s shared across the board, but it’s how we roll, you know? Like, we’ve had some Superintendent level suspensions for some high-level incidents that the principal’s hands were tied. But for the most part our incidents, our- (Pause). I’m sorry I’m like losing my vocabulary-the incidents are resolved restoratively through restorative dialogue with the Behavior Specialist through like parent conferencing with the administrators etc.

  - *The RJC is endorsing changes to the disciplinary process, evidence of RPs influence on the school’s structure.*

- And I did it in multiple ways with different groups of staff, teachers, school aides, everyone. So, it was through those conversations or different groups that I ran asking questions of the disparity, of disproportion that we got to collective that actually started to create some protocols to combat or at least handle some of these things.
The RJC discusses creating protocols to better address crisis situations which can be seen as a change to policy and practice.

**Code 3B: Instructional Dimension (Culturally Responsive RP implementation)**

The instructional dimension refers to using tools of instruction that are compatible with the students’ cultural background (Richards et al., 2007). This dimension may include validating students’ cultural identity with classroom and school-wide practices, and instructional materials. The instructional dimension may also include disrupting deficit theories (defining students by their weaknesses rather than their strengths) and promoting a more strength-based approach (Valencia, 2010).

**Coding Scheme**

0- Absence of statement endorsing RJC’s use of tools that are compatible with the students’ cultural background

1- Presence of statement endorsing RJC’s use of tools that are compatible with the students’ cultural background which may include combatting deficit theory and promoting a more strength-based approach.

99- Not enough information provided.

**Examples of 1s**

- And you know we were having that conversation and really bringing that back in the fold around, how do we have this conversation about higher expectations? We’re doing a lot of work on the Instructional Leadership Team on increasing conferencing as a tool for teachers to build relationships with students and identify strengths and identify lags in skills.
The RJC discusses working on a tool that encourages teachers to identify strengths.

**Code 4: Student Leadership and Voice**

Student concerns and opinions are solicited, and students have opportunities to lead RP, SEL, and equity initiatives (Indicator 7 from the *12 Indicators of Restorative Practices Implementation*; Gregory et al., 2021).

**Coding Scheme**

0- Absence of statement about student voice.

1- Presence of statement endorsing students concerns and opinions are solicited and/or opportunities to lead RP initiatives.

2- Presence of statement endorsing students concerns and opinions are solicited and/or opportunities to lead RP initiatives *with an equity lens* (RJC conceptualizes student leadership and/or voice as a mechanism of equity initiatives).

99- Not enough information provided.

**Examples of 1s**

- ... there have been more students more open about what is working in their school and what’s not working in their school.
  - **RJC is endorsing increased student input**

- [Interviewer] When you say greater equity in leadership what do you mean by that?  
  [RJC] I would say it’s the same thing with young people like having their voices heard in an authentic way, and having their voices considered, and having an impact on decision making at the school.
The RJC mentions how student voice can considered a mechanism of equity in leadership.
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